



The World Community for Christian Meditation

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August 7 Readings



An excerpt from John Main OSB, "I Am as I Am," WORD

MADE FLESH: Recovering a Sense of the Sacred through Prayer (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2009), pp. 40-41.

[I]f we can only learn the humility, patience and fidelity to say our mantra we can enter fully into everything there is. This is the present-ness of the mystery of God, who is, who is now, who is always, who is all. The time-bound structures of language and the ego-bound drives of desire and imagination perpetually fail to find the entrance to this mystery. The mantra, taking us into the present moment and beyond the ego, slips through the narrow gate into the city of God. [. . .]

Saying all this, of course, is one thing. Understanding it is another and understanding is severely limited in the finitude and dualities of our mental perceptions. Yet understanding is like a signpost pointing to this core experience of being who we are. Life can only satisfy us if it is lived from this core. Why should we try to be anything else if God is content to be God? God is the self-communicating creativity of love. Prayer is simply full receptivity to that creative energy at the deepest, most real center of our being where we are nothing but what we are. Here, beyond all effort and self-projection, all guilt or shame and all psychological operations, we explode into the realization of being known by the One who is.

Perhaps you have been meditating for long enough to know that it is not the thought or feelings that are important. God as the center of our soul is important. When we talk of finding our own center we mean finding God. Yet language here is one-sided. Meditation is equally being found by God. Stillness takes us into the silence beyond the lopsidedness of language. It restores us to the inner equilibrium from which we can then use language more precisely and truthfully. But we are still so that God may find us in our finding of him at the deepest level of our being.

This is why faithfulness to the daily meditation and to our mantra during meditation is everything. We know that we must not think about God or imagine God during these all-important times, simply because he is present. God is here, not just to be found, but to be loved. And being in love we let thoughts fall away.

I am convinced that there is nothing in death or in life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths---nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:38-39)

What need then to be discouraged by your distractions?

After Meditation, from Sufi Narrative, noted in Willigis Jager, SEARCH FOR THE MEANING OF LIFE (Liguori, MS: Triumph Books, 1989), p. 267.

"Ask them," the abbe begged me once more, "how they prepare to come before God. By fasting?"

"Oh no," answered a young dervish, laughing. "We eat and drink and praise God."

"Dancing," answered the oldest dervish, with a long white beard.

"Dancing?" asked the abbe. "Why?"

"Because dancing extinguishes the ego," said the old dervish. "When the ego has died away, there is no obstacle to union with God."

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